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This report is published because of the light it sheds on the worker's life and the industrial system of the U.S.S.R.

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Trusts or Ministries

Every Ministry is a trust, its production rate depending on the rate of the others in the State. The Ministry for the Production of Heavy Machinery for instance, cannot work unless it receives raw materials from the appropriate ministry allocating such materials. The Ministry for Fuel, cannot operate if it does not receive the necessary heavy machines and material. This is where the Planning Commission comes into the picture; here plans are made for each of the Ministries which specify the exact figures of production for the year, quarter and month, and prices. No industry can fix its own prices - all is dictated. Each ministry has its own sections, i.e., the Ministry for Non-Ferrous Metals has the following sections, copper, nickel, tin, zinc, lead, etc., and each section is concerned with the distribution of its material only. Ferrous metals are in a separate ministry, as are the precious ones. Everything is concentrated in Moscow - Moscow determines the life of the whole country.

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The Communist Cells

Each ministry sends its plans to the sections which, in turn, sends them on to the factories, foundries, mines, etc., in their district. When the plans arrive at the factory they must be discussed first in the communist cell, this is done so that the workers can become acquainted with the plans, prices, etc., so that they can contest plans or accept them, or make counter-proposals enlarging the program and raising the standards. These plans are also discussed at meetings of the technical personnel, the leaders of the cells, as well as, at workers' unions, since these groups are responsible for the factory's production. Discussions go on endlessly, but the results are always the same- the programs are always carried through, occasionally the rates might be raised. The only allowed opposition is that touching on details of execution, or organization of the work in the factory, or bad management of one part of the plant. The food problem is always the goal of much criticism on the part of the workers during their meetings. Much is said about the bad quality of available clothing for work, the bad quality of food products and about "rations" which are not always available - thus, forcing the worker to buy his food on the "free market" organized by the government, or from the "kolchoz" at prices far above his means. These discussions make these meetings appear very active, but their purpose is to draw attention away from the main subject. The U.S.S.R. apparently regards criticism as a good safety valve, as long as it does not pertain to the directives of the ministry and is aimed at the lower brackets of management alone. Meetings have to be conducted in this manner and are encouraged.

As soon as the yearly program is adopted (which is adopted "with enthusiasm" according to the notations in the minutes of meetings) the administrative work begins. One sends to his ministry, lists of all the necessary raw materials, stating the required quantities of electrical energy, water, fuel, all equipment and machines. You must not forget anything, because after you have received the requirements from your sector, and have sent them to your section of the ministry, the latter will ask for the necessary funds from other agencies, who will notify the sections of their decisions after studying the production figures and requirements. As required, material figures are never approved in total, the section divides materials among the factories, thus reducing material figures, but not production figures, as was decided up at the meetings. Therefore, it is the duty of the administration to constantly find new methods of production, adopting a system of continual and ever increasing economy. Normally, this system succeeds, as everyone is interested in the production end; in prices and bonuses, if the rates are surpassed, or if the factory has produced at prices lower than those fixed by the ministry.

The Fight Against Waste

It is because of the above, that one can see a worker using tools, which his French counterpart would have discarded. Others will bring to the factory from their homes, old rags and brooms to be used for cleaning machinery. Everyone does whatever he can to reduce costs, since the factory is the property of the State, all waste is severely punished, and any worker who would take a piece of wood or shaving home would be put in jail for at least a year. The law is extremely severe in connection with petty thievery in a factory. Anyone found with a nail in his pocket can be indicted. This is true, also, in connection with being late for work -- it is also punished by imprisonment. I knew a working girl who was sent to jail for a year because she had been 15 minutes late for work twice. She was the mother of a three month old baby -- the baby was sent to a nursery--the mother to jail.

Choosing a Scape Goat

Officially, the manager of a plant does not have to be a communist. However, I never saw one who was not. His staff is made up of the technical manager and chief engineer. These three are responsible to the ministry for the quality of work and production of the plant. The responsibility for good working conditions in the plant rests with the secretary or the communist cell and the secretary of the workers' union. The "manager in chief" and the two secretaries are called to the communist meetings of the district or province to report on the work of their factories. They must also make reports to the secretary of the communist party of the district or province.

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Five Minute Meetings

Every false move is noticed immediately as the provincial committees are well staffed with controllers. The day's work is shown on diagrams and the under-secretaries visit the factories often for the purpose of control. The Managers often request the assistance of the regional secretaries; e.g. if there are no cars to move the goods, or if coal does not arrive because of some fault of the railroad or the mine, a telegram is dispatched to the party and things soon start moving again. At the plant are held the so called "five minute meetings" which sometimes last for hours. They are attended by the workers and the technical personnel. When the eight hour brigade has finished its shift, the workers are called for the "five minute discussion" at which time the problem is to find out how the work is progressing, how much produced and what to do with the non-cooperative workers.

The Collective Court

Meetings of all workers and of the whole personnel are sometimes quite different. This is especially the case, if the plant has not fulfilled its quota. The speakers will be especially chosen and each one asks himself "who is going to be the scape goat"? Of course, there must have been lazy individuals and saboteurs. The chief manager, the secretary of the party, and the secretary of the union have had a meeting the previous day, at which time the procedures were discussed and there the scape goats were chosen. After a report containing production figures, prices, criticism of deliveries and food supplies, is read by the technical manager, the following statement is always made "Comrades, all this does not justify our careless work. We could have worked better, if in our midst there were not men who still do not understand our responsibilities towards our State, the party, and our collective system. They retard our 'stakhanov system', they demoralize our personnel with their bad will." The chief manager, who is sitting with the "presidium", puts on a severe face adapted to the circumstances; he steps to the rostrum when the technical manager finishes his speech, and invariably says: "Comrades, you have heard the technical manager who is right, but he did not tell the whole truth, for he did not tell us the names of those who disorganize the plant and sabotage our efforts. Conscious of my responsibility as a member of our communist party and of my responsibility to it and the workers' masses, I will officially point out to you the saboteurs."

It is now that the indictment begins -- during this time the secretary of the union shows signs of great emotion, takes a notebook out of his pocket, writes in it, and there is every indication that his answer is going to be a very strong one -- he goes to the rostrum and says: "Comrades, the charges formulated by Comrade Chief Manager, if they are justified, are so to speak, against me; and I must admit that I have not paid enough attention to what was going on in the plant. But you, comrades, know how things really are -- I work day and night and my duties are most trying. I have failed by not prodding our members at the right time, when they were sinking morally, but one is unable to do everything at one time. Put yourselves in my place; my duty lies in defending our comrades -- their fault is great, but I appeal to your comradely feelings. I will say even more, I am convinced that the accused will do everything in their power to redeem their faults and that before the next meeting, we will find them among the 'stakhanovs'."

The secretary of the party will thus whine about these happenings, and will threaten the saboteurs with the severest punishment. After this, the chief manager summarizes the proceedings, and declares that he will take the union secretary's defense into consideration, and that he will forgive the offenders this time, but let it be a last warning -- if the incident occurs again, the offenders will be brought to court. The meeting is then adjourned. These meetings are repeated once or twice a month, and one always hears the same phrases.

Workers' Books

Every worker has to have a book in which his arrival to and departure from the plant are noted, and also the kind of work he does. The book is kept in the plant files, and only returned to the worker when he leaves, as one cannot be employed without a book. Before taking a job, a detailed questionnaire must be filled out on which not only educational,

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working and other data must be reported, but also all details on military service and the workers' parents. This questionnaire remains in the factory, and will be sent after him if he changes his place of employment. In this way the questionnaires go from factory to factory, but the worker does not know what ratings he has been given in connection with his work and behavior. The manager and the secret section are very well informed. Up to 1944, a worker could not leave a factory without the manager's permission.

Settlement of Disputes

All disputes are settled by a special commission comprised of the manager and the union secretary's deputies. There are no appeals from the pay scales. It does happen, however, that when a pay is miscalculated, the worker may file a complaint, which is settled by the above commission. The union has nothing to say about pay problems - they are settled by ministerial decree after a collective contract has expired. There can be no mass protest, as there can be no strikes. If the workers tried to strike, they would be doing so against the State. At the present time the pay scales do not correspond with the actual cost of living, even when the lowest standards are taken into consideration. Pay scales are raised by the government when it sees fit to do so. At the workers' meetings, the question of pay is never raised, only problems of efficiency and productivity can be discussed. If food prices go up, pay scales are raised after a time, but they never allow for the higher cost of living.

My Day as a Manager of a Plant

25X1 During my time [redacted] I resided in a villa. I had a servant, a carriage and horses, and a coachman - all privileges due the manager of a section of a large plant. It might be interesting to note a few points about my personal life, which did not vary a great deal from the life of any technical manager in USSR.

I wake up at 5:30 every morning. My wife awakens the servant who prepares my breakfast. At 6 a.m. the carriage arrives to take me to the factory, a distance of three kilometers. Before leaving the house, I receive telephone reports from one of my four assistants. After he talks to me, he phones the chief manager and the secretary of the party; then he will go to the "five minute meeting" which ends the night shift. This meeting is held in the bathing hall, since the workers are in a hurry to get home, and one would be unable to keep them in any other locality. About 7 a.m. I arrive at the plant, and inspect the services. The night brigade who left in a hurry (taking advantage of the darkness) did not clean up and the new shift does not want to do the work for the other, so that one must raise one's voice, curse and threaten. After the "five minute meeting" the engineer on duty arrives to make a more detailed report. It is he who receives the daily ration of soap, it is his duty to keep order, and he should not have allowed the night shift to get away before they had cleaned up. The day starts with curses and threats; one even thinks of revoking the engineer's bonus for the month.

Economy is Imperative

At 8 a.m. I enter my office. The employees are already there. I find a mass of papers on my desk to be signed for the warehouses, since nothing is delivered without signed papers. I am responsible for economy in my section. I call the electro-technician and the engineers to justify their requirements. Every one of my men must give me the minutest details of the work done during the night and must receive instructions for the day. Then I go on a tour of inspection.

The End of a Long Day

Every head of a brigade must write a report on the day's work before he leaves the factory. The chief electrician and the chief mechanic must also state their proposals for economy and the speeding up of work. They must also indicate the inefficient workers and ask for penalties for them. This demands from the manager of a large section, masses of reports and paperwork. All of this must be done very carefully since everyone tries to "pass the buck" and place the responsibility entirely upon the manager. The manager of a large section usually has a secretary who makes up the reports. The manager only makes his notes on the margin and signs the reports.

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After 11 a.m. reports from the chief manager come in. These must be verified, and one must see in whose sector work was deficient, and whether sanctions were taken. Also, one must learn all the directives concerning the whole factory. At noon I am a little freer, and start my inspection, which is more detailed than in the morning. I have to look into every spot. I must never praise anyone. On the contrary, I must always criticize. About 2 p.m. there is a change of shift. The workers know I am in the plant and everyone does all he can to leave things in order. I go to the "five minute meeting" which lasts an hour, as I must listen to complaints and answer many questions. At 3 p.m. my carriage drives up to take me home to lunch. Then there is an hour's rest, but often many telephone calls. At 6 p.m. back to the plant for the third inspection and if everything goes well I am back home at 8 or 9. At 10 I make my deputy's report and then go to sleep.

Few Quiet Evenings

Often the chief manager calls a meeting of the technical personnel for 8 or 9 p.m. On such evenings I get home at midnight. On the other hand, I am also expected to arrange meetings with my technicians, to inform them of decisions made and these cannot be held during the day. I also have to discuss many social plans and programs, collective contracts, "piatiletki", or go to meetings of the dispute commission, which always take place in the evenings.

Necessity for Shirking Responsibility

I have an assistant manager, two German engineers as consultants, four young Russian engineers, a chief mechanic, a chief electrician, chief foreman for each eight hour brigade, chief foreman for the gas service, also a German who commands 7 foreman.

In my office are numerous accountants, personnel officers and staff, who plan for personnel, workers' safety and issue statistical and daily reports on personnel who are at work. This mass of personnel may seem unwarranted to Western conceptions, however, this is not the case in Russia. Here, where the administration is in the hands of the State, the one thing that counts is to constantly and forever think of how you can "pass the buck," and take no responsibility.

Life of a Russian Worker

The following is a description of an average worker's day in U.S.S.R. Let us take a worker who lives in the country and works in the RR repair shops in Sverdlovsk.

This man gets up at 5 a. m. He takes a piece of bread and bottle of milk (if he is lucky enough to own a cow) and goes to a point where the train passes. I underline "where the train passes" because there is no station building, only a platform of planks, where in the winter 40° to 50° below zero might be the temperature. In spite of this, they would rather get there early and wait for the trains, for all late comers are punished. The cars are always over-crowded. The workers sleep during the trip or they smoke in silence, because the Russian has great respect for his neighbor's sleep.

After leaving the train, there is another jaunt of 6 kilometers to the plant. The crowds on the tramways are tremendous and the trains are hard to board.

The worker at last gets to his destination already tired before he has even started his day's work. After finishing his shift, there is the short "five minute" meeting. Lucky is the man who lives outside of town for he has an excuse to catch the train and can leave earlier, although trains are often late. If he lives about 60 kilometers from the plant, he will arrive home about 10 p. m. to get up at 5 a. m. the next day. However, he has his little house which will not be confiscated, a garden, a few chickens, maybe a pig, or even a cow. The one who lives in the city must be present at all meetings, of which there are many. If Stalin makes a speech, it must be commented on, word for word, sentence for sentence. If it were a long one it will take more than one evening.

It is a maxim that the worker must not use his free time except for study, activity in the collective work of his factory, or in the country's political life. For these reasons, the secretary of the union constantly calls meetings at which these problems are discussed. On the other hand, the secretary of the party also calls meetings at least once a week, as does the secretary of the communist youth. In the meantime, the movie club shows propaganda films and the press finishes the job.

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Clubs

On the whole these are well organized and have extensive membership. City workers spend most of their free time at these clubs. They have theaters with a seating capacity of a thousand, where one can see good programs and scenery. Theatrical companies from Moscow tour these clubs frequently. There are also many amateur performances by members. The clubs have gymnasiums and stadiums for outdoor games and military training.

The large Moscow theaters are out of range in price for the workers - 30 to 50 rubles a seat. Moving picture houses are more reasonable - 3 rubles a seat. At the clubs one pays one ruble. In spite of these reasonable prices, vodka and beerhalls are competitors as many an overworked man likes vodka and beer better than pictures.

Paid Leave

Only after twelve continuous months of work in the same factory, does a worker acquire the right to leave or compensation if he does not wish to take his leave. The minimum leave is two weeks per year, however, this varies with the kind of work done. In mines and metallurgical plants, where heat, gases and humidity create special fatigue, leave can be extended to three or four weeks. This is determined by the contracts between the union and the ministries. Everyone spends his leave as he wishes, although the most exhausted can request to be placed in a sanitarium. Russians call a sanitarium a rest home, where mostly long drawn-out maladies are cured. Basically, the worker is supposed to pay for his stay in a sanitarium and his transportation there, though unions can help those with large families. One cannot spend his leave in a sanitarium with his family. It rarely happens that the wife is in the same state of health as the husband, and has leave at the same time as he. Touring is excluded as it is too expensive.

In 1941, a month at a sanitarium would cost 900 to 1200 rubles, in a rest house 500 to 600 rubles. Every union has its own rest homes and only members are accepted. All are treated alike without regard to social standing. There are, of course, rest homes which are more luxurious, but these are only for higher State employees, the Army and the NKVD. Artists, professors and writers have their own and these are somewhat better equipped.

When arriving for "rest" you must adapt yourself to the rules and regulations. You must be up at 7 a.m. and must retire before 11 p.m. The meals are good and plentiful, so that after a fortnight you may gain up to 10 kg. This is normal because after twelve months of hard work, the worker arrives exhausted and under-nourished. During his leave he gets cocoa, butter, meat, milk and cream, but no vodka or beer. There are still too few rest homes, in spite of the fact that additional ones are being built every year.

How to Obtain a Ration Card

Russia has no blackmarket, but there is a "free market" organized by the government where you can buy anything, but at very high prices. Except in very rare cases, can a worker afford these so ration cards are essential.

After 24 hours at a place one must appear at the "militia" offices with your passport and a form signed by the housing committee on which is indicated the space you occupy (6 square meters per person). This form also indicates the place you came from, the reason for the change of address, passport number, name, religion, etc. You must be prepared to spend sometime at the "militia" offices. After receipt of your "first papers" you return to your flat, take the lodgers book, buy a special stamp and return to the passport office, where you have another long wait. The next day your name is entered in the lodgers book and on your passport will be noted the length of time you will be allowed to stay. No one is allowed to take in a person without a permit from the "militia". Non-compliance is severely punished by fine or imprisonment. The housing committee, in any case, would take steps against you. The NKVD is constantly checking the lodgers' lists and their way of life. Passports are obligatory for all Soviet citizens. They not only identify you, but are formal documents without which you cannot exist. The tripticket of the "free citizen" is his passport, his worker's book and tools.

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After this, you have to make efforts to get your ration card, which can be had only after you have started to work, as it is given by the personnel office of your factory and in accordance with the job performed. A white collar employee gets less than a worker. However, artists, professors, and other intellectual workers receive additional items. A wife, as a worker's dependent, and other members of a worker's family if they cannot work, have a right to a ration card. Non-workers and their families have no rights at all.

Sverdlovsk, the Soviet Arsenal

The extensive effort of the Soviet Union to exploit the riches of the Urals and Siberia was indicated during the last war. These industries are modern, well planned, equipped with American and German tools, and with highly trained technical personnel.

The USSR needed foreign specialists to create their metallurgical industry in 1937, and to train their young engineers, but did not require their help to create their secret factories. Since 1937, all means have been used to eliminate non-Russian personnel from all branches of industry.

On our way to Sverdlovsk, we pass Perm-Molotov with its known factories, then Kungur, known not for its hoist and excavator plants, but for its grotto which is the most unique in the world.

The Kuzino siding leads to a large fireproof brick building and to Sred-Ural-Med which is the capital of the copper industry and the mines. Chrompik is, as the name indicates, a chrome foundry which produces not only enough for internal consumption, but can export great quantities of its production. A kilometer from this point, one comes upon Novotrubni where Mannesmann cylinders are made. Then, into the forest and to the Titanomagnetit mines. The next station is Krustalnaja, a rock-crystal mine used for optical purposes.

Wierszyna is the boundary-line between Europe and Asia. From this point, the train runs into Sverdlovsk junction where it crosses the following lines - Perm, Nizh-Tagi-Solikamsk, and continues past the machine-gun factory at Newiansk. In the Sverdlovsk suburbs there is a pond 10 kilometers long and two wide, on the right of which is an electric power plant. Then comes the V.I.Z. factory, which produces special sheeting for generators and electrical motors, followed by large brick buildings which are the governmental reserve warehouses.

The station at Sverdlovsk is modern and creates a good impression. Opposite this, is the railroad employees' club. Next, is a low building where the Tsar's family died. It is now the Sverdlov Museum. Sverdlov was chairman of the Party's Executive Committee and the town is named for him. In the museum there are a few pictures, some books and papers can be seen lying around - all remnants of Sverdlov.

Through the middle of this town runs Lenin Street, a long, wide and "citified" avenue with modern buildings. Then come the lyric theatre, the dramatic theatre, large stores and movie houses. On the main square where the Cathedral once stood, large reviewing stands have been erected - it is from this point, that the authorities review the parades on May 1st and November 7th.

The view onto the new university campus is imposing - the Industries' Institute building, the students' and professors' homes; the old firs were left intact and everything is green here. In Sverdlovsk also, are located the higher mining school, the chemical, medical and agricultural institutes, military schools, hospitals, clinics, professional and elementary schools.

Soviet Duplication of Foreign Machinery

The heavy industries are outside the town. Leaving the city by rail, along the highway which leads to the Ural factory for heavy machinery, one first sees the oxygen plant. The next stop is at the machine and tool plant which produces Soviet machinery copied from foreign models. This is done as follows: after three machines of a type

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have been acquired from a foreign country. The first is installed and used; the second, is taken to pieces by the research laboratories which copy all parts and make blueprints; the third, is taken to the chemical laboratories where the metal is analyzed, tested, etc. Then a few details are changed, the machine receives a Soviet trade mark and serialized production starts.

Modern Developments

At the third stop, the siding turns into the forest. After a kilometer run, one comes upon the immense buildings of the Ural factory for steam turbines, electrical apparatus and transformers. Out of this forest a workers' city is developing. The train crosses the line linking the heavy machine building factory with the Monetnaya works, where there are endless deposits of peat which supply the factories with fuel. The new city, Uralmasz is a modern development. All plants and installations are surrounded by a fence of barbed wire entanglements. The guard towers are manned by men armed with machine guns. You cannot penetrate these enclosures and in order to enter one of the offices, one must have a special pass and leave behind him anything he may be carrying.

Plant No. 2

The sections of this great plant are varied. One finds hundreds of draftsmen, engineers, constructors etc., who work in very large and well lighted buildings, using the most modern equipment and tools. Everything is made in Uralmasz - the factory of factories. All the rolling mills, excavators, mobile bridging and heavy machinery needed in metallurgy come from Uralmasz.

If one should lose his way inside this plant, he will immediately be stopped by an o.d. who will ask to see his identifications, then he will be escorted to his destination.

In Plant No. 2, "sworn-in" workers are kept busy, and anyone who cares for freedom will not ask them what they are working on.

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